



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

Request No: AD-IG-01(2)-13-2017
Key Word: Private/Voluntary Ambulances
Subject: Private/Voluntary Ambulances
Request: **Date Received:** 30/01/2017
Monitoring Date: 31/01/2017
Date of Response: 23/02/2017

Thank you for your request for information received on 30 January 2017 and which was dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We would also inform you that Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) Health and Social Care Trust has now completed its search for the information you requested and which is detailed below for your attention.

Question 1

Can you please advise if the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service has ever summoned the help of any private or voluntary ambulance service, i.e. St John Ambulance, Order of Malta, British Red Cross, Pro-paramedics, etc, to attend 999 calls?

Answer 1

Answer 1

As part of the sub-contract for ad hoc use of voluntary and private Ambulance services NIAS only sub-contracts non-emergency services. However we can advise that private sector non-emergency ambulances can provide transport for patients that have initially been identified as an emergency at point of 999 contact under a defined number of circumstances:

- At point of a 999 call, a NIAS RRV Paramedic or A&E ambulance is dispatched to attend an emergency call however on arrival and following assessment by a NIAS Paramedic (or other Health Care Professional (HCP) on scene), the patient may be deemed suitable for transportation by a non-emergency resource.
- A Health Care Professional can contact and request a non-emergency ambulance to transport a patient identified in the main as a Category C or Category C HCP (Card 35) call and deemed clinically suitable to be transported by them. In the main private non-emergency providers undertake Cat C HCP transportations;
- A non-emergency resource can be allocated to Card 35 HCP calls and on arrival find the patient's condition to have deteriorated. The non-emergency resource would request a NIAS A&E or RRV resource to attend the incident for further assessment, treatment and transport. The non-emergency resource may transport the patient with a Paramedic on Board or may be transported by an A&E vehicle.



Question 2

If so, have these who attended been supervised by NIAS personnel or have they been allowed to attend calls themselves?

Answer 2

Please refer to Answer 1 above. We can further advise that in the event of Major Incidents or NIAS REAP (Regional Escalation Action Plan) Red or Black NIAS reserves the right to avail of the memorandum of understanding (MOU) with St Johns, Red Cross and Order of Malta to provide ambulance response to emergency calls. However this has not had to be invoked to date.

Question 3

Also, if any, what category of calls have these services attended?

Answer 3

Please note the Trust monitors the use of voluntary and private ambulance usage on a daily basis. We have attached an example of activity attended to for the month of January 2017 broken down by Trust area and by voluntary/private provider. **Please refer to Answer 1 above regarding attendances to Cat A, B and C incidents as explanation on same has been provided.**

JANUARY 2017 – PRIVATE/VOLUNTARY ATTENDANCES

HSCT Area	EMERGENCY					ROUTINE	TOTAL
	A	B	C	TOTAL	HCP CALLS		
Belfast	3	8	1	12	179	39	230
South Eastern	2	3	2	7	154	3	164
Northern	0	1	1	2	164	1	167
Southern	0	0	0	0	41	4	45
Western	0	0	0	0	23	4	27
TOTAL	5	12	4	21	561	51	633

SERVICE	EMERGENCY					ROUTINE	TOTAL
	A	B	C	TOTAL	HCP CALLS		
Red Cross	2	3	0	5	248	21	274
St. Johns	2	8	3	13	117	18	148
CPNI	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ProParamedics	1	1	1	3	196	12	211
Order of Malta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	5	12	4	21	561	51	633

I hope the above fully assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter.

Please note that, under the Re-use of Public Sector Information Regulations, if you wish to publish or otherwise use this information besides for your own means, you will need to seek our permission to do so.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Finance and ICT Director, Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) HSC Trust, Site 30, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast, BT8 8SG.

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the Trust has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at:

Website: ni@ico.org.uk
Post: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF
Telephone: 028 9027 8757 or 0303 123 1114 (Belfast based Office)

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion. Please be advised that NIAS replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <http://www.niamb.co.uk>. Personal details in respect of your request will have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

Yours sincerely

Alison Vitty

Alison Vitty (Miss)
CORPORATE MANAGER